

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) Re-sealable strip device for drying and storage of micro-organisms comprising

- a strip comprising a water absorbent preparation containing at least one water absorbent substance and at least one protective substance
- a re-sealable housing which when being sealed provides a closed, water-impermeable system around the strip.

2. (Original) Re-sealable strip device according to claim 1, characterised in that the water absorbent preparation incorporates one or more substances that have both protective and water absorbent properties.

3. (Currently Amended) Re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterised in that the primary water absorbent preparation further comprises one or several absorbent bibulous foam or fibre-based pads or other matrices.

4. (Currently Amended) Re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~one or more of claims 1 to 3~~, characterised in that the water absorbent preparation is in contact with or in proximity to a secondary water absorbent preparation.

5. (Currently Amended) Re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~one or more of claims 1 to 4~~, characterised in that the secondary water absorbent preparation has the format of one or several absorbent beads, tablets, plugs, bibulous foam or fibre-based pads enclosed within the strip device.

6. (Currently Amended) Re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~one or more of claims 1 to 5~~, characterised in that the re-sealable housing is a foil pouch.

7. (Currently Amended) Re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~one or more of claims 1 to 6~~, characterised in that the re-sealable housing comprises one or more

access windows over each of which there is a water impermeable cover that can be opened and re-sealed such that once re-sealed the device regains its water impermeable properties.

8. (Currently Amended) Re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~one or more of claims 1 to 7~~, characterised in that the re-sealable housing has a label.

9. (Currently Amended) Re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~one or more of claims 1 to 8~~, characterised in that the re-sealable housing has a secondary tear or peel seal which can be opened in order to aseptically remove the strip.

10. (Currently Amended) Process for the drying and storage of viable micro-organisms by

- a) providing a re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~one or more of claims 1 to 9~~;
- b) opening a re-sealable access window cover in the housing of the strip device to gain access to the strip;
- c) adding the micro-organism preparation to be dried through the said window on to the water absorbent preparation located on the strip;
- d) sealing the strip device by closing the re-sealable window cover on said housing;
- e) storing the strip device,

whereby the amount of the micro-organism preparation and the amount of the water absorbent preparation within the device are chosen such that after the addition of the micro-organism preparation the water absorbent preparation is able to absorb the water contained in the micro-organism preparation and remain substantially dry.

11. (Original) Process according to claim 10, characterised in that, after step e), the micro-organisms are recovered by

- f) opening the strip device and removing the strip from the housing;
- g) rehydrating the micro-organisms.

12. (Currently Amended) Process according to claim 10 ~~or 11~~, characterised in that, in step e), the strip device is stored at a temperature between 0°C and 30°C .

13. (Currently Amended) A kit for drying and storage of micro-organisms at least comprising a re-sealable strip device according to claim 1 ~~one or more of claims 1 to 9~~.